

Amendments to the Claims

1. (Previously presented) A process for producing aromatic ethers comprising a step of reacting phenols with an oxirane compound with use of an anion exchange resin as a catalyst, wherein the reaction of the phenols with the oxirane compound is carried out in the presence of a solvent having a solubility parameter ranging from 7.0 to 20.0, and a crystallization step following the reaction step, wherein a solvent used in the crystallization step is identical in kind to a solvent used in the reaction step, and all or part of the solvent used in the reaction step is included in the crystallization step.

2. (Original) The process according to Claim 1, wherein the phenols include multivalent phenols, and the aromatic ethers producible by the reaction contain a phenolic hydroxyl group and an alcoholic hydroxyl group.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Original) The process according to Claim 1, wherein the phenols include phenol or cresol.

5. (Original) The process according to Claim 1, wherein the phenols include catechols, resorcinols, or hydroquinones.

6. (Original) The process according to Claim 5, wherein the phenols include catechol, resorcinol, or hydroquinone.

7. (Original) The process according to Claim 1, wherein the phenols include bisphenols.

8. (Original) The process according to Claim 7, wherein the phenols include bisphenol A, bisphenol S, bisphenol fluorene, or bisresol fluorene.

9. (Original) The process according to Claim 1, wherein the oxirane compound includes ethylene oxide, propylene oxide, isobutylene oxide, or 2,3-butylene oxide.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Previously presented) A process for producing aromatic ethers having an alcoholic hydroxyl group comprising a step of reacting phenols with an oxirane compound with use of an anion exchange resin as a catalyst and a crystallization step following the reaction step, wherein a solvent used in the crystallization step has a solubility parameter ranging from 7.5 to 12.5, and wherein a solvent used in the crystallization step is identical in kind to a solvent used in the reaction step, and all or part of the solvent used in the reaction step is included in the crystallization step.

12. (Previously presented) Aromatic ethers having an alcoholic hydroxyl group, which are producible by reacting phenols with an oxirane compound with use of an anion exchange resin as a catalyst, wherein the content of a metal in the aromatic ethers is less than 100 ppm by mass, and the content of a halogen element in the aromatic ethers is less than 100 ppm by mass.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Previously presented) A process for producing aromatic ethers comprising a step of reacting phenols with an oxirane compound, other than isobutylene oxide, with use of an anion exchange resin as a catalyst, wherein the reaction of the phenols with the oxirane compound is carried out in the presence of a solvent having a solubility parameter ranging from 7.0 to 20.0.

15. (Previously presented) The process according to Claim 14, wherein the oxirane compound is selected from the group consisting of ethylene oxide, propylene

oxide, 1,2-butylene oxide, 2,3-butylene oxide, pentylene oxide, styrene oxide, and cyclohexene oxide.

16. (Previously presented) The process according to Claim 15, wherein the oxirane compound is ethylene oxide and/or propylene oxide.

17. (Previously presented) The process according to Claim 14, wherein the phenols include multivalent phenols, and the aromatic ethers producible by the reaction contain a phenolic hydroxyl group and an alcoholic hydroxyl group.

18. (Previously presented) The process according to Claim 14, wherein the phenols include phenol or cresol.

19. (Previously presented) The process according to Claim 14, wherein the phenols include catechols, resorcinols, or hydroquinones.

20. (Previously presented) The process according to Claim 19, wherein the phenols include catechol, resorcinol, or hydroquinone.

21. (Previously presented) The process according to Claim 14, wherein the phenols include bisphenols.

22. (Previously presented) The process according to Claim 21, wherein the phenols include bisphenol A, bisphenol S, bisphenol fluorene, or bisphenol fluorene.

23. (New) The aromatic ethers having an alcoholic hydroxyl group according to claim 12, which further have a phenolic hydroxyl group.

24. (New) The aromatic ethers having an alcoholic hydroxyl group according to claim 23, which comprises mono(hydroxyethyl)ether of catechol.

25. (New) The aromatic ethers having an alcoholic hydroxy group according to claim 23, which comprises mono(hydroxyethyl)ether of hydroquinone.

26. (New) The aromatic ethers having an alcoholic hydroxy group according to claim 23, which comprises mono(hydroxyethyl)ether of resorcinol.

27. (New) The aromatic ethers having an alcoholic hydroxy group according to claim 12, wherein the content of a metal in the aromatic ethers is less than 50 ppm.

28. (New) The aromatic ethers having an alcoholic hydroxy group according to claim 12, wherein the content of a metal in the aromatic ethers is less than 30 ppm.

29. (New) The aromatic ethers having an alcoholic hydroxy group according to claim 12, wherein the content of a metal in the aromatic ethers is less than 10 ppm.

30. (New) The aromatic ethers having an alcoholic hydroxy group according to claim 12, wherein the content of a metal in the aromatic ethers is less than 1 ppm.